

## WEB 2.0, SOCIAL MEDIA, BLOGGING AND WIKI PROJECTS

September 12, 2011

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This year, to help our students develop their reading, writing, media literacy, and critical thinking skills as well as cultivate their understanding of different people and cultures, our students will be using a variety of social media applications (blogs, wikis, podcasts, google applications, Voice Thread, Bitstrips for Schools, Twitter, etc.) via the internet. When students are able to safely share their ideas with an audience broader than just our classroom, often they can discover their voice and become even more motivated to learn, communicate and share their ideas effectively. In addition, they will learn valuable Digital Literacy and Digital Citizenship skills that are crucial in today's digital world.

A blog is an interactive type of writing similar to an online journal. A student will write a post that is short and concise. Readers are able to respond and comment on the initial written post. The writing remains interactive and contributors are able to correspond back and forth using the blog site. Research shows that blogging improves student writing skills due to increased motivation to write. Wikis are collaborative websites (like Wikipedia) where students can contribute ideas and make changes to information, post discussion items and respond to others.

The blog writing will take place on our WRDSB Wordpress server. For other projects, we may use the following internet sites: [Wikispaces](#), [VoiceThread](#), [Glogster](#), [Google](#), [Wordle](#), [Edmodo](#), [Twitter](#), [Bitstrips for Schools](#), [Reading Rewards](#), etc. Throughout all projects and applications, student identities will be protected. Only student participants and the teacher will be able to add posts or comments. Sites will be password controlled and monitored exclusively by the teacher.

At the beginning, students will be invited to participate as "contributors". This means that all of their entries must be approved by the teacher before being posted to the blog, wiki or social media site. This will add another level of security and ensure that guidelines are followed. Students will be able to read and comment on each other's entries after teacher approval. Blog and wiki posts and responses as well as other project work on these sites will be evaluated with class time provided to work on entries. As usual, rubrics will be generated and expectations discussed in class for each assignment. Alternative tools are always an option.

The following personal safety rules will be maintained when using any Internet tool or application:

- Never reveal information (written or visual) about your own or someone else's personal identity online (ie. name, address, phone number, age, physical description or school).
- Never reveal your access password or that of anyone else. If you think a password is no longer secret, tell the teacher right away.
- Always use your own password (or whole class log in). You may not misrepresent yourself by assuming another's identity.
- Never change or delete the work of another without permission from both the student and the teacher.
- Always be respectful in what you create. No inappropriate language, insults, bullying, texting short forms, or rude wording will be allowed in projects or comments.
- If you know that someone has broken these rules, you must report it to the teacher immediately.
- All tools and applications must be used in accordance with *WRDSB's Acceptable Use Policy, Digital Code of Conduct, and Character Development guidelines*, even if you work from computers outside of the school.
- Use of copyrighted material (such as pictures you find on the web) must be done with proper credit. Check to be sure you know how to do this correctly. Suggestions will be given in class.

**Please sign here to acknowledge that you agree to respect and follow these personal safety rules.**

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Parent/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_

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In order to set up the accounts, we will use the email address provided for each student through our WRDSB student email initiative. This email will be used to participate in school internet activities that require a sign-up. This will be done at school. Students will be given a personal password and login. Once students have received this school email address and password, they must copy it down and keep it in a safe place. Passwords must be kept private at all times.

Since we will also be using a number of Web 2.0 applications in class this year, in particular Google documents, a Google account is recommended. (When working in Google, memory sticks are unnecessary and students can work on any type of device, both at home and at school. Our board is currently working on registering for a Google Apps for Education account. Stay tuned!) Students can register for a free account through Google if they do not have one already. Please visit <http://www.google.ca> to register. I will demonstrate the process at school so that all students know what to do.

In January, students may also choose to join a Facebook class network that will be used as an additional tool for instructional purposes. Recently, the WRDSB has unblocked this social networking site **for students 13 years of age or older**. This will be a learning opportunity for all involved and we will investigate appropriate and safe uses for this popular site. Please review the **Digital Code of Conduct** and **Character Development** handouts included in the first-day package and post in a prominent place at home.

The deadline for permission forms and submission of email addresses is **Monday, September 19th, 2011**.

Thank you,  
Mme Giannopoulos.

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**(Please return to Mme Giannopoulos by Mon., September 19th, 2011.)**

I have read and understood the information about social networking, web 2.0 sites, blogging, and wikis.

\_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to participate in:

(Student's Name)

- ☐ • the blogging and wiki projects (Wordpress and Wikispaces)
- ☐ • other web 2.0 applications through a Google account or student WRDSB email
- ☐ • our class Facebook group (in January when all students are 13 years of age)

*\*\*Please check only those items you give permission for your child to participate in. As always, alternative tools will be used to ensure communication and work completion ie. homework board, planners, paper copies, workbooks, etc.*

Please feel free to contact me at school if you have any further questions about these initiatives.

Parent Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_